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UNDERUTILIZATION OF WOMEN WORKERS.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATUS OF WORKING WOMEN AND THEIR UNDERUTILIZATION IN THE NATIONAL WORK FORCE IS PRESENTED IN SUMMARY AND GRAPH FORM. ALTHOUGH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN ASSURING WOMEN EQUALITY OF PAY AND NONDISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT, MUCH NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE UTILIZATION OF THEIR ABILITIES. MOST WOMEN WORK TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS. OF THE 34 MILLION EMPLOYED IN 1965, 24 PERCENT WERE SINGLE, 18 PERCENT WERE WIDOWED OR DIVORCED, 11 PERCENT HAD HUSBANDS EARNING UNDER $3,000 AND ONLY 34 PERCENT HAD HUSBANDS WITH INCOMES OF OVER $5,000. OCCUPATIONALLY WOMEN ARE INCREASINGLY DISADVANTAGED. IN 1940 THEY HELD 45 PERCENT OF ALL PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL POSITIONS, BUT CURRENTLY HOLD ONLY 37 PERCENT OF SUCH JOBS. EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS IN SOME FIELDS ARE STILL HIGH. THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN AMONG ALL SERVICE WORKERS ROSE FROM 40 PERCENT IN 1940 TO 55 PERCENT IN 1966. ABOUT ONE-FIFTH OF WORKING WOMEN WHO HAD COMPLETED 4 YEARS OF COLLEGE WERE EMPLOYED AS CLERICAL, SALES, SERVICE WORKERS, OR FACTORY OPERATIVES. IN 1965, THE MEDIAN WAGE OF WOMEN WAS ONLY 60 PERCENT THAT OF MEN COMPARED WITH 64 PERCENT IN 1955. OF ALL WOMEN WHO WORKED FULL TIME YEAR ROUND IN 1965, 29 PERCENT RECEIVED INCOMES OF LESS THAN $3,000, AND 9 PERCENT EARNED $7,000 OR MORE A YEAR. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES ARE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER AMONG WOMEN, PARTICULARLY NONWHITE WOMEN, THAN MEN. AMONG TEENAGERS, NONWHITE GIRLS ARE THE MOST DISADVANTAGED, THREE OF 10 BEING JOBLESS. (FP)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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UNDERUTILIZATION OF WOMEN WORKERS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WOMEN'S BUREAU
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President Johnson said recently:

"The underutilization of American women continues to be the most tragic and the most senseless waste of this century."

FOREWORD

The maximum utilization of all human resources is essential to the growth of our economy and to the building of a just and challenging society. We cannot afford to waste the abilities and talents of any individual in our effort to achieve these goals.

The President's Commission on the Status of Women, which was established in 1961 to study the problems affecting women's role in the economic, political, and cultural life of the Nation, was particularly concerned with ways in which the abilities and talents of women could be used to the maximum. Realization of this goal, the Commission believed, is possible only when each woman can choose freely "her contemporary expression of purpose, whether as a center of home and family, a participant in the community, a contributor to the economy, a creative artist or thinker or scientist, a citizen engaged in politics and public service."

Limitations on freedom of choice for many women, as for many men, are imposed by economic need. Women may be further limited by social customs and tradition in their choice of life patterns and in their preparation for them. The Commission's report, American Women, contains important recommendations for developing opportunities for women to serve more effectively in the home, in the community, and in employment.

Considerable progress has been made in implementing the Commission's recommendations with respect to employment opportunities. Even before the final report was written the findings of the Commission contributed to a Presidential directive requiring that all selections for appointment, advancement, and training in the Federal service should be made without regard to sex, except in rare instances found justified by the Civil Service Commission.

Legislation to assure women equality of pay and nondiscrimination in employment has been passed at the Federal and State levels. The Federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 assures women equal pay for equal work. Thirty-one States have similar laws, and five others and the District of Columbia have fair employment practices laws prohibiting discrimination in pay based on sex. Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. Fourteen States and the District of Columbia have a similar prohibition in their statutes.

Implementation of the two Federal statutes has been effective. Investigations under the equal pay provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act have disclosed underpayments of more than $5.5 million to more than 13,500 employees during the first 3 years of enforcement. Nearly one-third of all complaints received by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under title VII of the Civil Rights Act have been concerned with discrimination on the basis of sex.

Despite these steps forward, there is a great deal more to be accomplished. The need to improve women's relative position in the economy is still urgent. The number of women in the civilian labor force has more than doubled since 1940, and women today constitute 36 percent of all workers as compared with 25 percent prior to World War II. This expanding participation of women in the labor force, however, has not been accompanied by a proportionate improvement in the utilization of their abilities, as evidenced by women's disproportionate and increased concentration in the less skilled, less rewarding, and less rewarded occupations.

Occupationally women are relatively more disadvantaged today than they were more than 25 years ago. In 1940 they held 45 percent of all professional and technical positions. Currently they hold only 37 percent of such jobs. This deterioration in their role in career fields relative to men has occurred despite the increase in women's share of total employment over the same period and the rising proportion of women who enroll in and graduate from institutions of higher education. The barriers against employing women in other than the so-called traditionally women's professions are still high, and many of the myths regarding women's ability to hold administrative and managerial positions--beliefs not based on facts--still prevail.

The proportion of women among all service workers (except private-household) has increased since 1940--rising from 40 to 55 percent. Many women hold jobs far from commensurate with their abilities and educational achievement. For example, in March 1966 about one-fifth of the working women who had completed 4 years of college were employed in nonprofessional jobs as clerical, sales, or service workers or as factory operatives.

The increasing concentration of women in the lower paying occupations in recent years is reflected in the gap between the median (half above, half below) earnings of women and men. In 1965 the median wage or salary income of women who worked 35 hours or more a week and for 50 to 52 weeks was only 60 percent that of men. In 1955 it had been 64 percent.

Of all the women who worked year round full time in 1965, 29 percent received incomes of less than $3,000, and only 9 percent had incomes of $7,000 or more. (The comparable percentages for men were 11 and 43 percent, respectively.) Moreover, the median pay of women is much below that of men. The median wage or salary income of year-round full-time workers in 1965 was: white men, $6,704; nonwhite men, $4,277; white women, $3,991; and nonwhite women, $2,816.

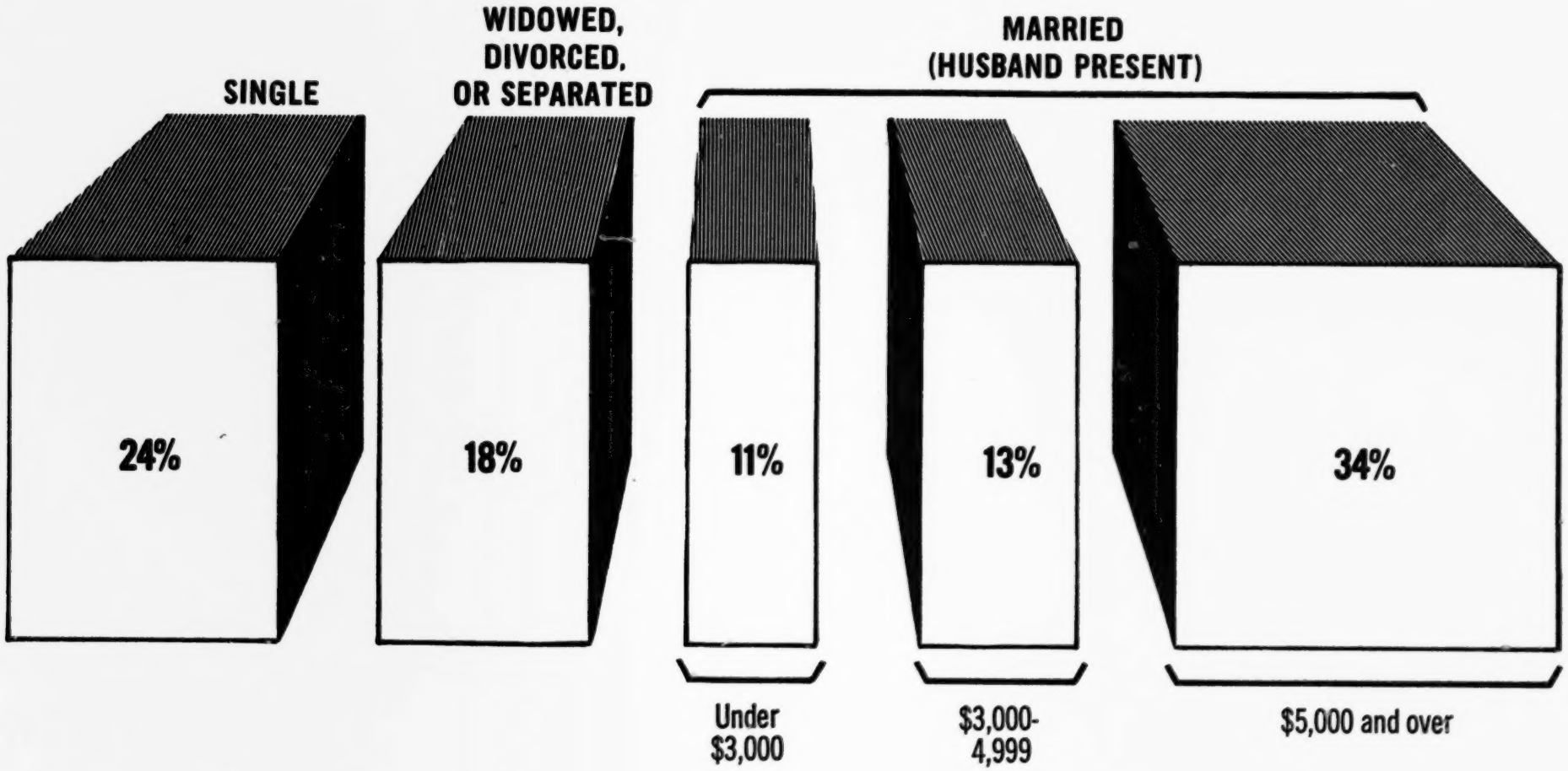
Another indication of the relative underutilization of women's skills and educational attainment is their unemployment rate, which remains considerably higher than that of men. Among teenagers, nonwhite girls are the most disadvantaged: about 3 out of 10 are jobless. Similarly, among adults nonwhite women experience excessively high unemployment rates.

The following brief summary statements and charts document aspects of the underutilization of women workers and may prove helpful in the intensified efforts now underway to assure fuller use of the abilities of the Nation's women.

Mary Dublin Keyserling
Director, Women's Bureau

CHART A.– WOMEN WORK BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC NEED

(WOMEN WITH WORK EXPERIENCE IN 1965)



Source: See page 23.

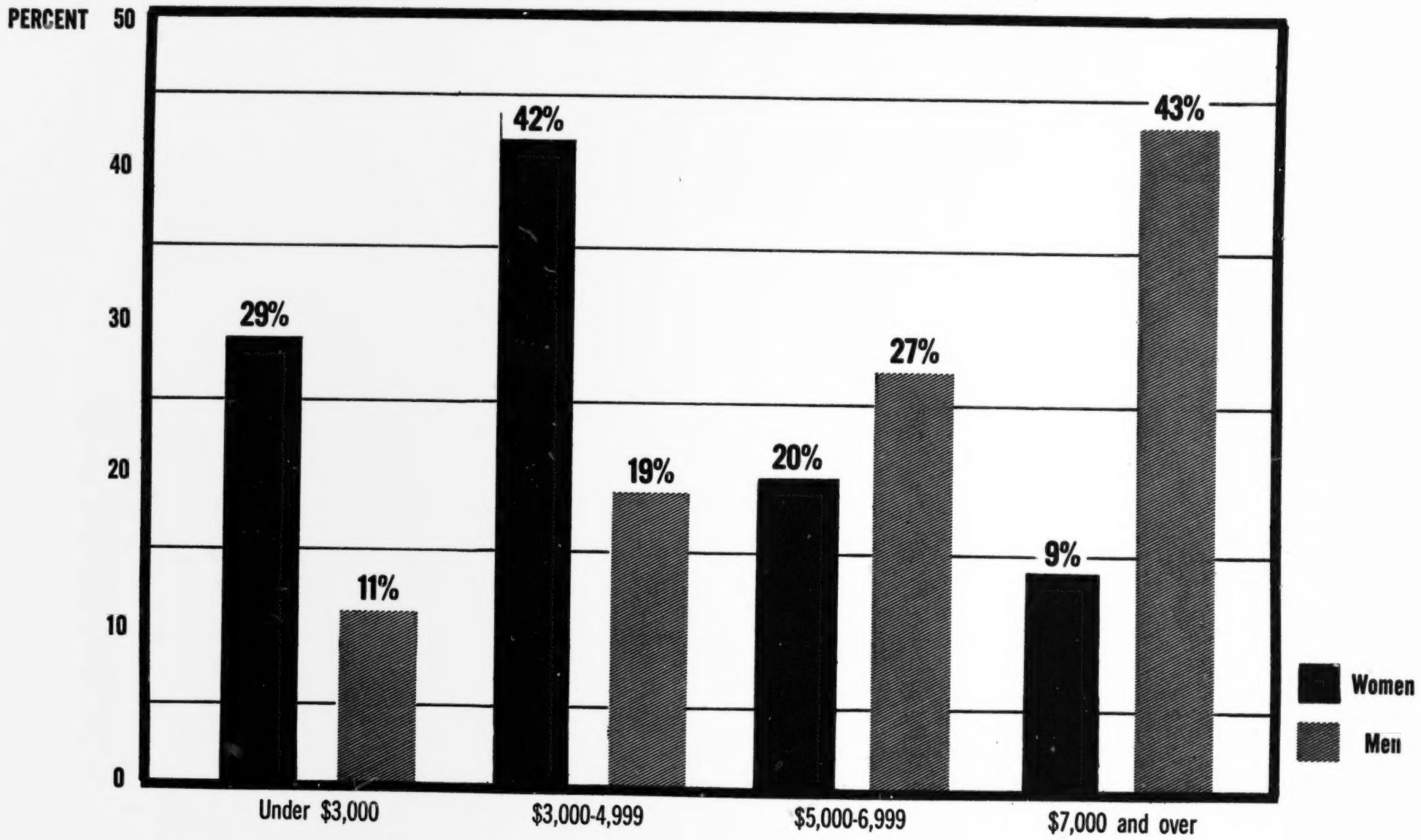
UNDERUTILIZATION OF WOMEN WORKERS

Women Work Because of Economic Need (Chart A)

Most women work to support themselves or others. Of the 34 million women who worked at some time in 1965, 18 percent were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands; many of these women were raising children in a fatherless home. Another 24 percent of women workers were single. In addition, married women whose husbands' incomes are inadequate or barely adequate to support their families often are compelled to seek gainful employment. Eleven percent of all women who worked in 1965 had husbands with incomes below $3,000 a year. Thirteen percent had husbands whose incomes were between $3,000 and $5,000 a year, which is still considerably below the level generally regarded as modest but adequate for an urban family of four. About one-third of all working women had husbands with annual incomes of $5,000 or more.

CHART B.–3 OUT OF 10 WOMEN WHO WORK YEAR ROUND FULL TIME* RECEIVE LESS THAN $3,000 A YEAR

(YEAR-ROUND FULL-TIME WORKERS, BY INCOME AND SEX, 1965)



* 50 to 52 weeks a year, 35 hours or more a week.

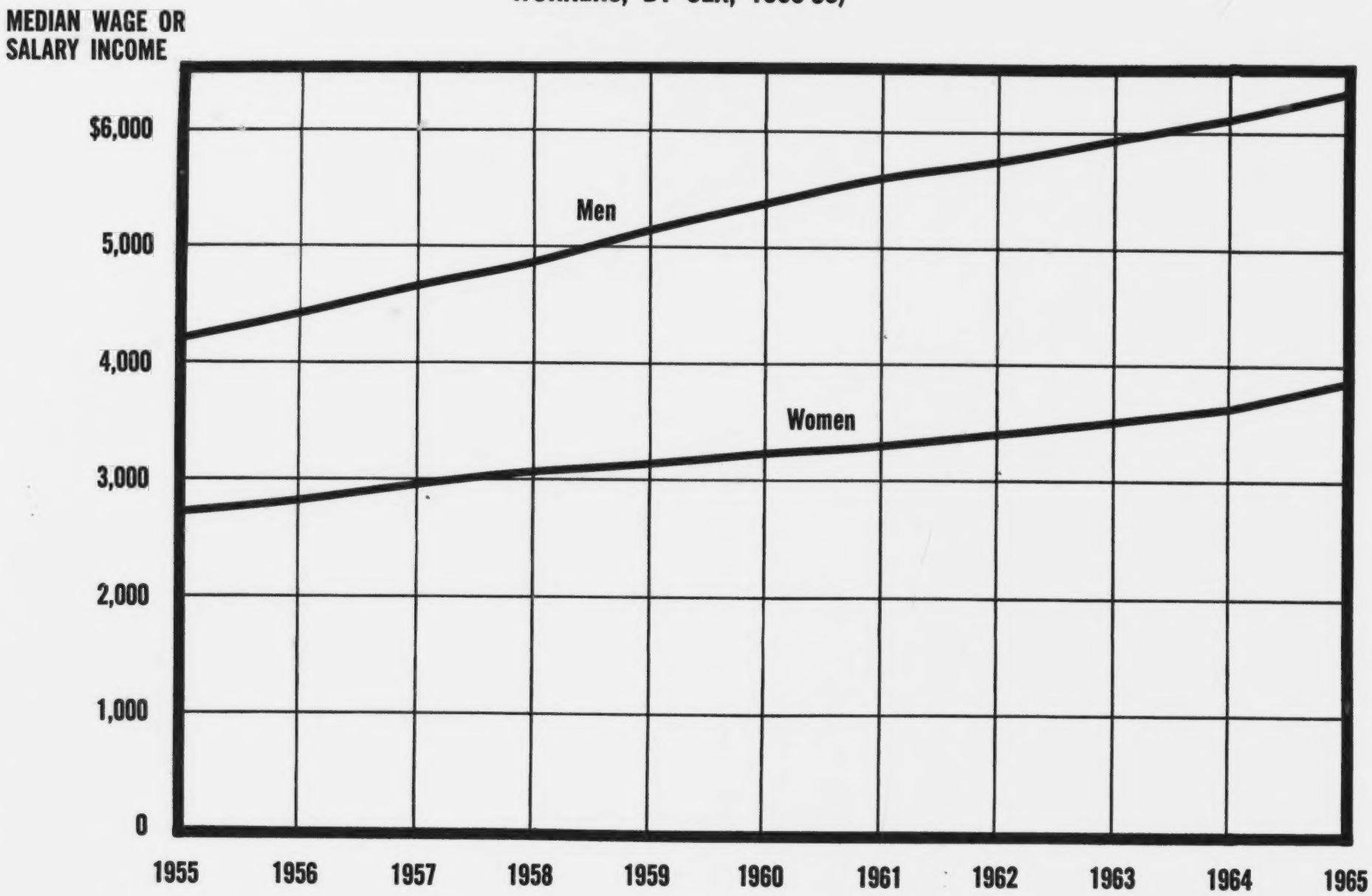
Source: See page 23.

3 Out of 10 Women Who Work Year Round Full Time Receive Less Than $3,000 a Year (Chart B)

About 3 out of 10 women who worked year round full time in 1965 had incomes of less than $3,000. Another 42 percent had incomes between $3,000 and $5,000 a year. In contrast, among men year-round full-time workers, 11 percent had incomes of less than $3,000 a year and 19 percent had incomes between $3,000 and $5,000 a year. At the upper end of the income scale, only 9 percent of the women but 43 percent of the men who worked year round full time had incomes of $7,000 or more.

CHART C.–THE EARNINGS GAP BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN REMAINS WIDE

(WAGE OR SALARY INCOME OF YEAR-ROUND FULL-TIME * WORKERS, BY SEX, 1955-65)



* 50 to 52 weeks a year, 35 hours or more a week.

Source: See page 23.

The Earnings Gap Between Women and Men Remains Wide (Chart C)

In 1965 the median wage or salary income of year-round full-time women workers was only 60 percent that of men. This was also true in 1963 and 1964. In 1955 it had been 64 percent. Thus the earnings gap between women and men remains wide. In fact it is virtually as wide today as it was before World War II when half as many women were employed.

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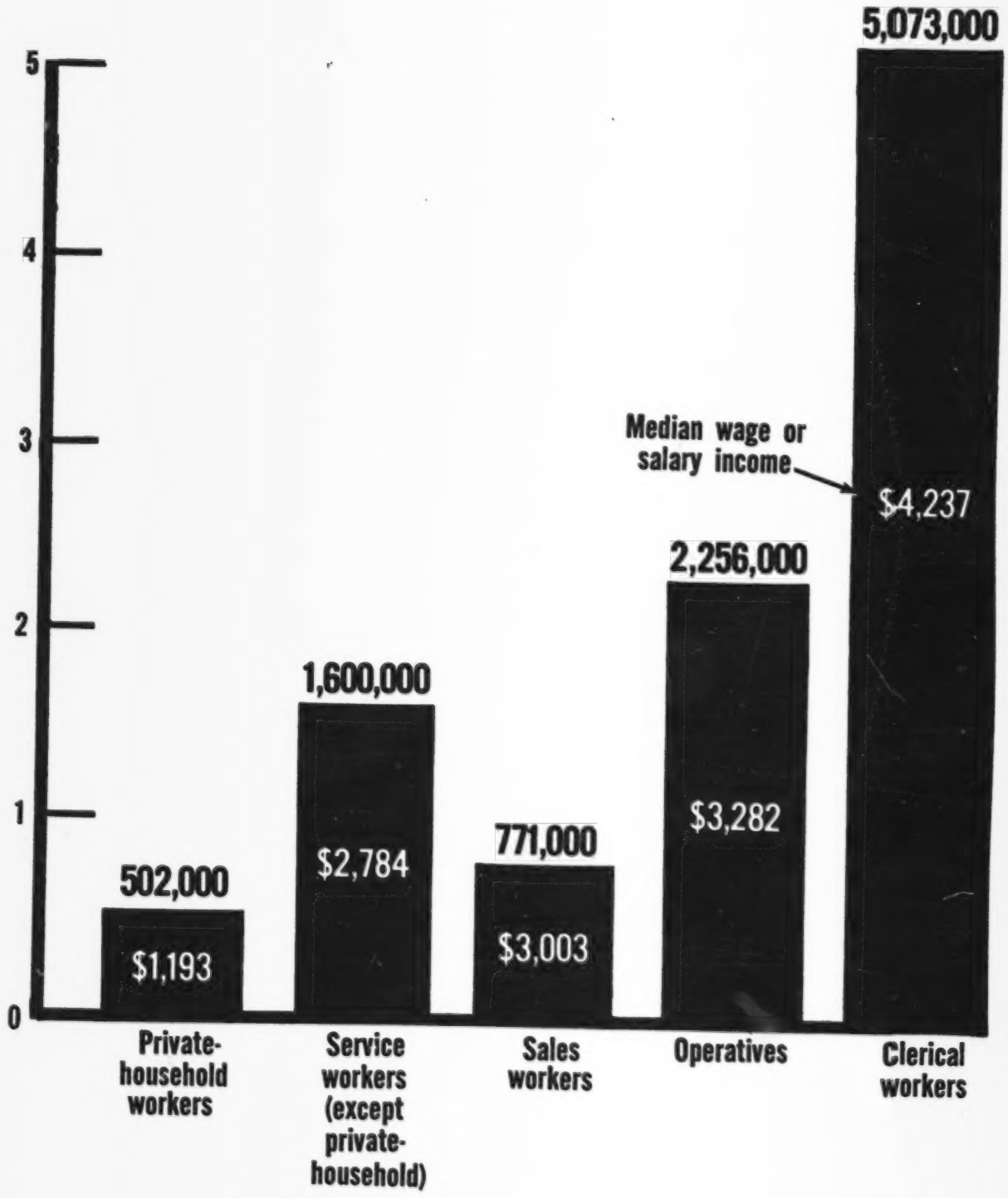
CHART D.–MILLIONS OF WOMEN ARE IN LOW-PAID OCCUPATIONS

(YEAR-ROUND FULL-TIME* WOMEN WORKERS, SELECTED OCCUPATIONS AND MEDIAN WAGE OR SALARY INCOME, 1965)



* 50 to 52 weeks a year, 35 hours or more a week.

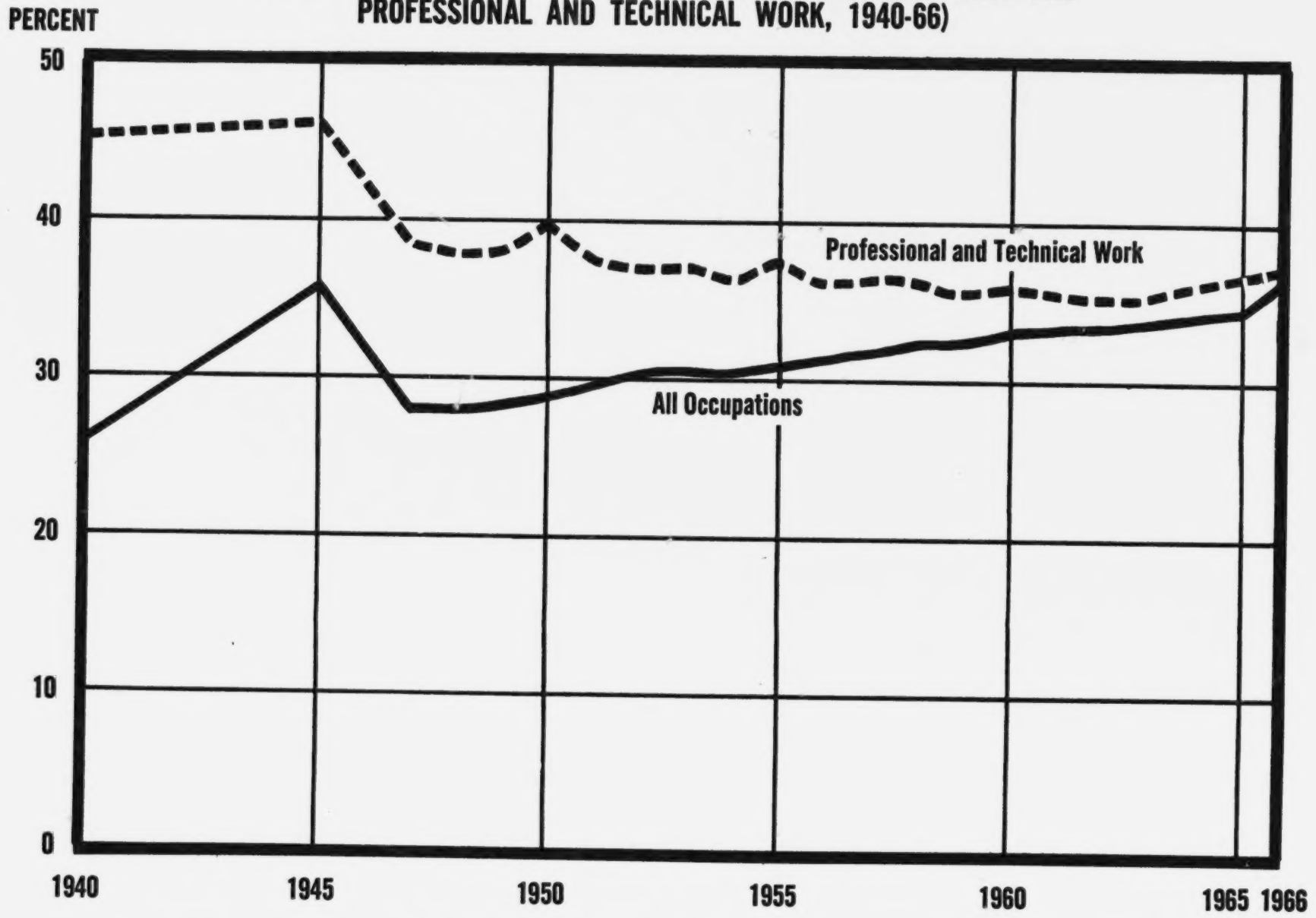
Source: See page 23.

Millions of Women Are in Low-Paid Occupations (Chart D)

About 2.9 million women who worked full time year round in 1965 were sales workers, service workers (except private-household), and private-household workers. Their median earnings were $3,003, $2,784, and $1,193, respectively. Another 2.3 million year-round full-time women workers were factory workers with a median wage or salary income of $3,282 a year.

CHART E.–WOMEN'S SHARE IN PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORK HAS DECLINED

(WOMEN AS PERCENT OF TOTAL EMPLOYED, ALL OCCUPATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORK, 1940-66)



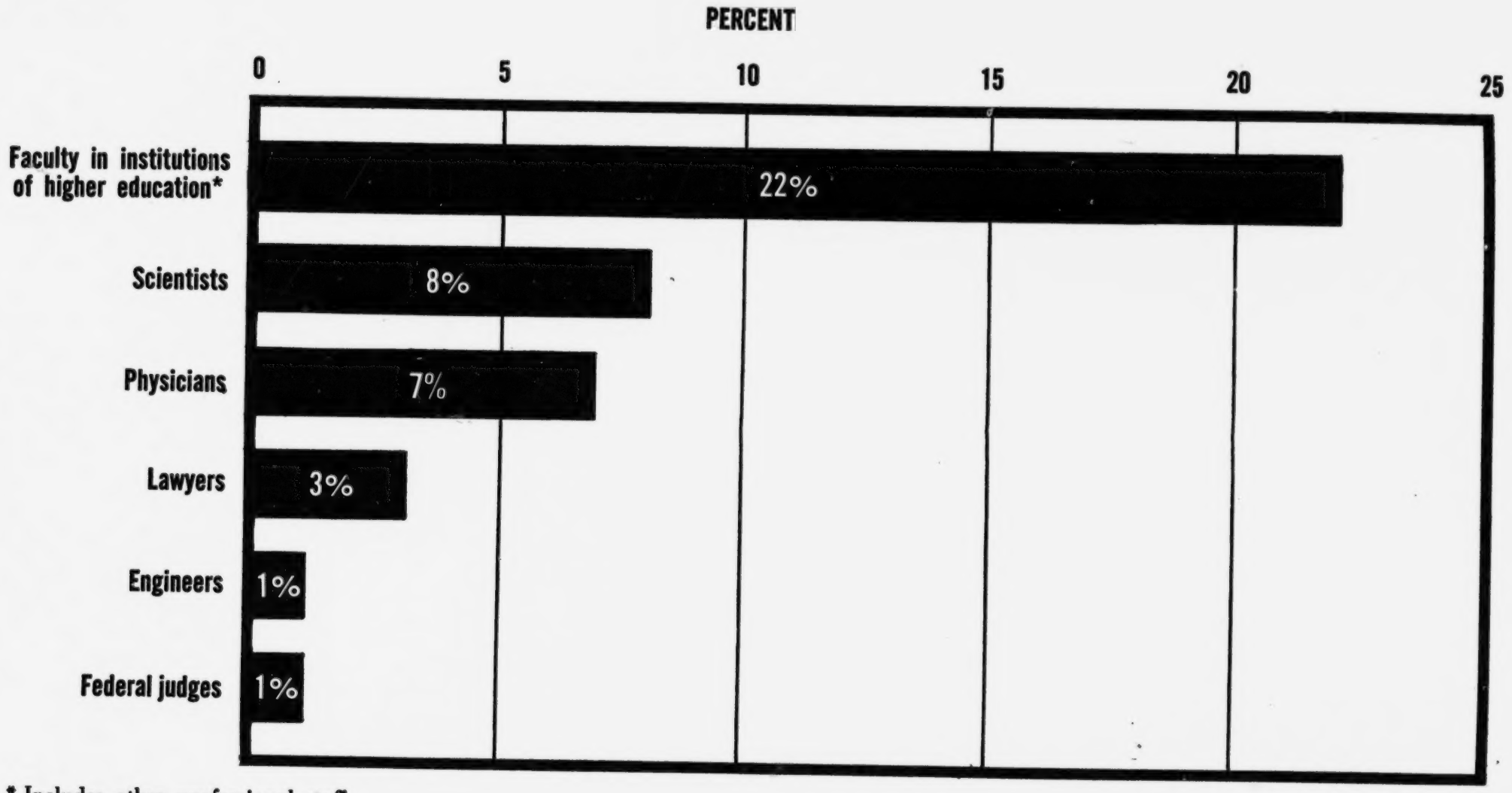
Source: See page 23.

Women's Share in Professional and Technical Work Has Declined (Chart E)

Although the number of women employed in professional and technical occupations has doubled since 1940, women are a smaller proportion of all professional and technical workers today than they were before World War II. Women represented 37 percent of all professional and technical workers in 1966 as compared with 45 percent in 1940. In contrast, the proportion of women among all workers increased from 26 to 36 percent over the same period.

CHART F.–WOMEN ARE INADEQUATELY REPRESENTED IN LEADING PROFESSIONS

(WOMEN AS PERCENT OF TOTAL EMPLOYED, SELECTED PROFESSIONS)



* Includes other professional staff.

Source: See page 23.

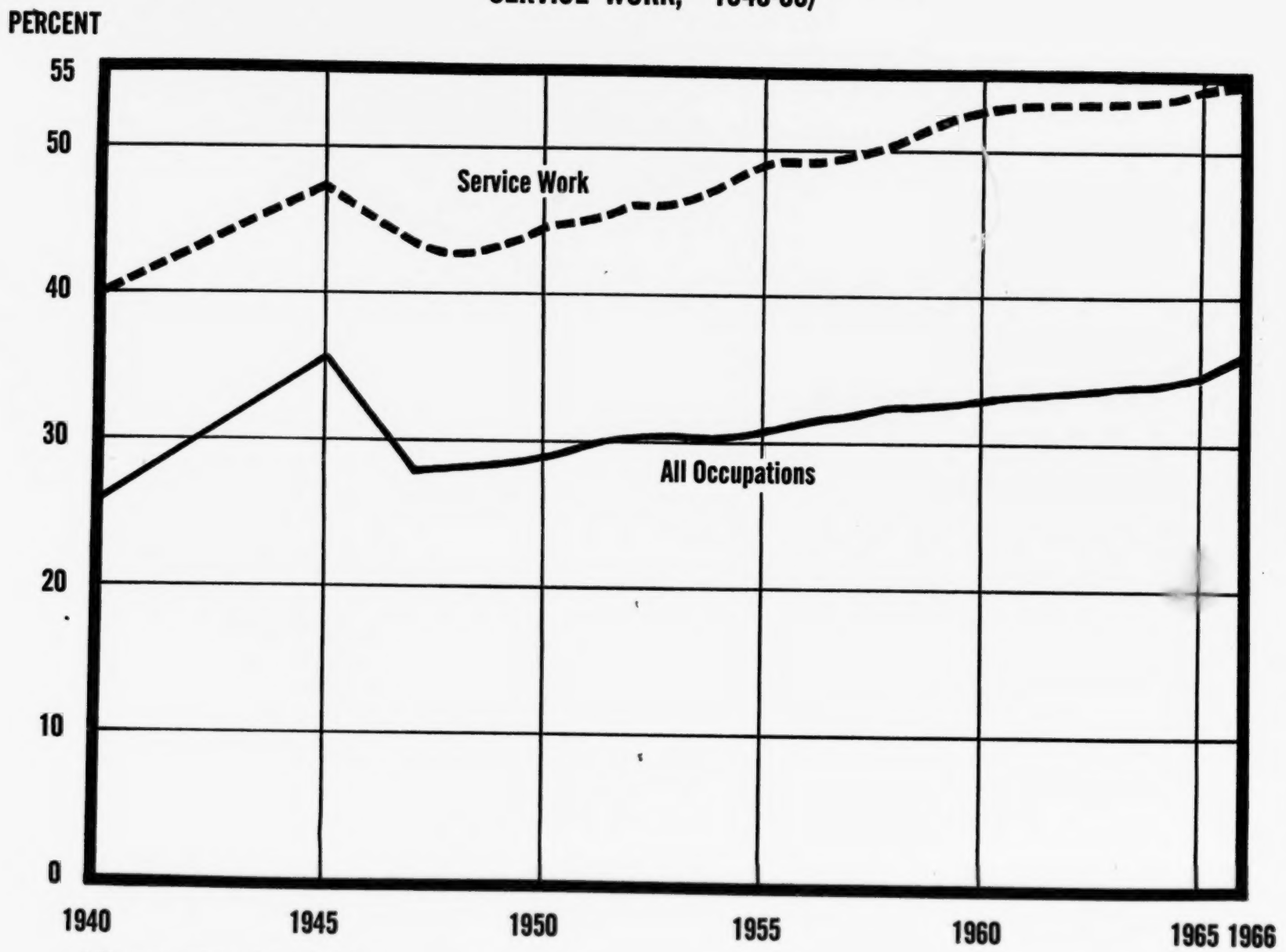
Women Are Inadequately Represented in Leading Professions (Chart F)

Women hold a disproportionately small share of positions in leading professions despite their 37 percent share of all professional and technical occupations in 1966. Although women traditionally have made up a large part of the teacher corps, in recent years only 22 percent of the faculty and other professional staff in institutions of higher education were women. This is a considerably smaller proportion than they were in 1940 (28 percent), 1930 (27 percent), or 1920 (26 percent) and only slightly above the 20 percent they were in 1910.

Women are heavily represented in the health fields, but in 1967 only 7 percent of all physicians were women. Similarly, women in recent years have had only a token representation among scientists (8 percent), lawyers (3 percent), and engineers (1 percent).

CHART G.–WOMEN ARE INCREASING AMONG THOSE IN LESS SKILLED JOBS

(WOMEN AS PERCENT OF TOTAL EMPLOYED, ALL OCCUPATIONS AND SERVICE WORK,* 1940-66)



* Except private-household.

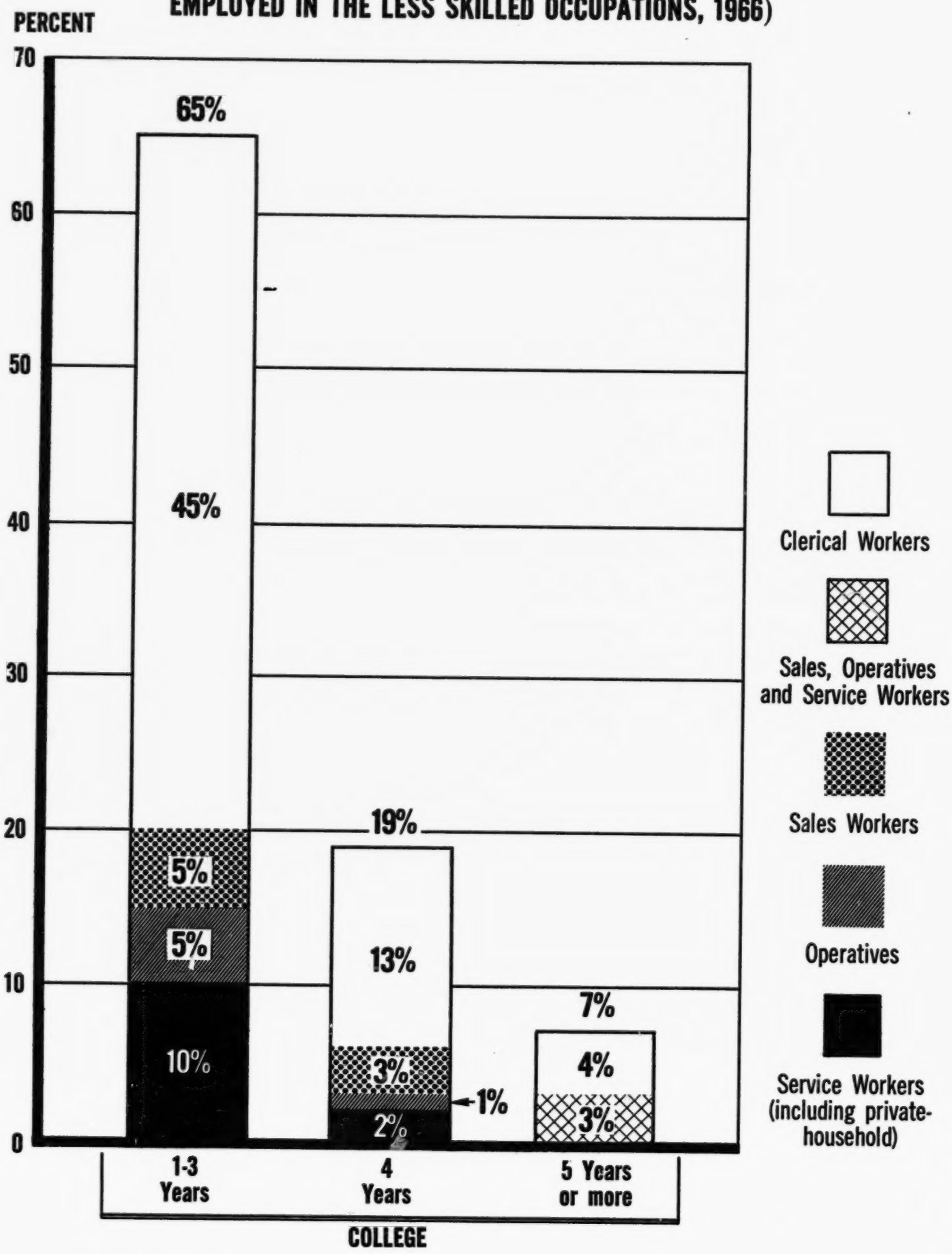
Source: See page 23.

Women Are Increasing Among Those in Less Skilled Jobs (Chart G)

In contrast to the declining proportion of women among professional and technical workers, the proportion of women in the less skilled and lower paid service occupations is increasing. Women were 55 percent of all service workers (except private-household) in 1966 as compared with 40 percent in 1940.

CHART H.—MANY WOMEN WORKERS ARE UNDERUTILIZED IN RELATION TO THEIR EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

(WOMEN WITH 1 OR MORE YEARS OF COLLEGE EMPLOYED IN THE LESS SKILLED OCCUPATIONS, 1966)

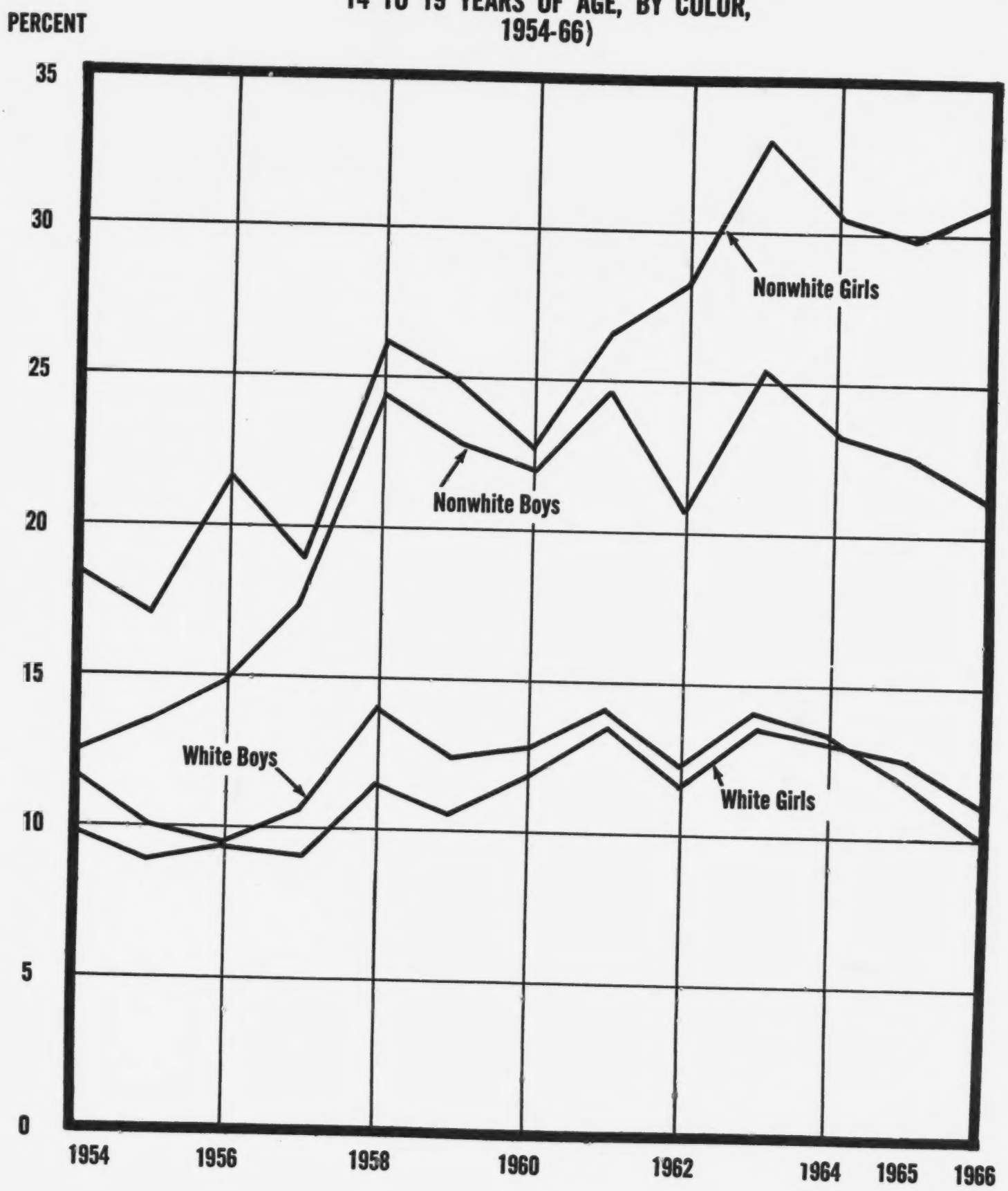


Source: See page 23.

Many Women Workers Are Underutilized in Relation to Their Educational Achievement (Chart H)

The educational backgrounds of a great many women are not being fully utilized in their jobs today. A startling 7 percent of employed women who had completed 5 or more years of college were working as service workers (including private-household), operatives, sales workers, or clerical workers in March 1966. About one-fifth of employed women with 4 years of college were working in these occupations, as were two-thirds of those who had completed 1 to 3 years of college.

CHART I.—3 OUT OF 10 NONWHITE TEENAGE GIRLS ARE UNEMPLOYED



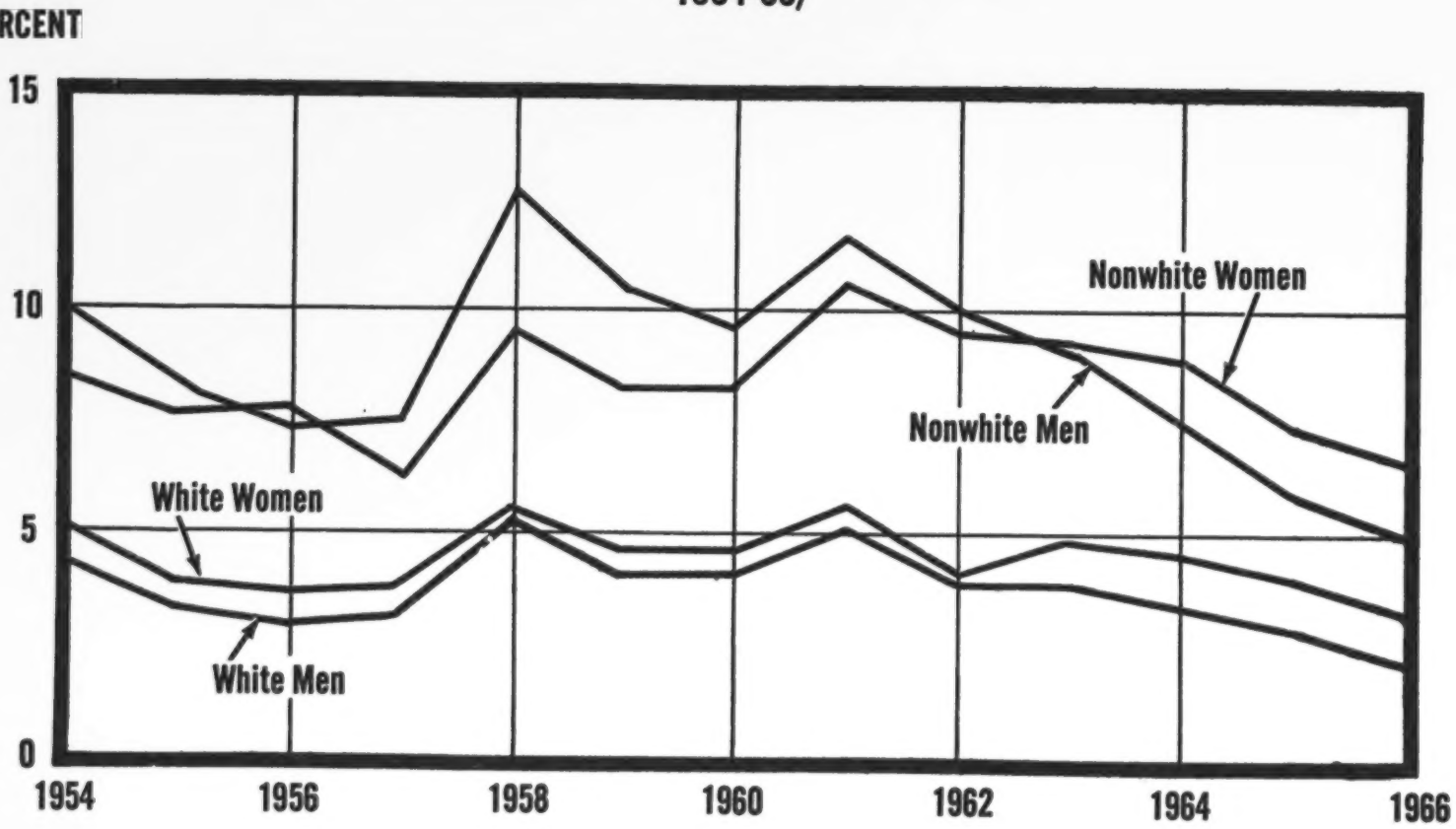
Source: See page 23.

3 Out of 10 Nonwhite Teenage Girls Are Unemployed (Chart I)

Unemployment among teenagers (14 to 19 years of age) is most severe for nonwhite girls--31 percent in 1966. It was considerably higher in 1966 than it had been in 1957 (19 percent). Next most disadvantaged are nonwhite boys, whose unemployment rate was 21 percent in 1966. In contrast, the unemployment rates for white girls and white boys in 1966 were 11 and 10 percent, respectively.

CHART J.–CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG ADULTS IS MOST SEVERE FOR NONWHITE WOMEN

(UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF WOMEN AND MEN 20 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, BY COLOR, 1954-66)



Source: See page 23.

Current Unemployment Among Adults Is Most Severe for Nonwhite Women (Chart J)

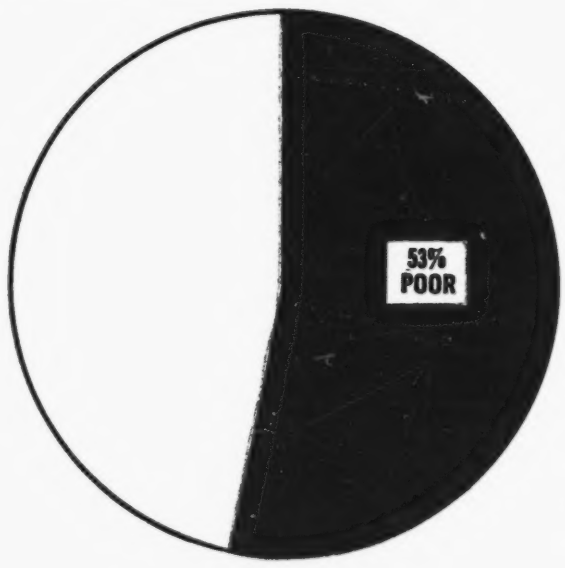
Among adults 20 years of age and over, unemployment currently is most severe for nonwhite women--6.6 percent in 1966. The comparable rates for nonwhite men, white women, and white men were 4.9, 3.3, and 2.2 percent, respectively. Historically, unemployment among adults has been highest among nonwhite men. Beginning in 1963, however, unemployment has been more severe among nonwhite women than among nonwhite men.

CHART K.–INCIDENCE OF POVERTY IS HIGH IN FAMILIES HEADED BY A WOMAN WORKER

(PERCENT OF FAMILIES, HEADED BY A WORKER, LIVING IN POVERTY IN 1965, BY SEX AND COLOR)

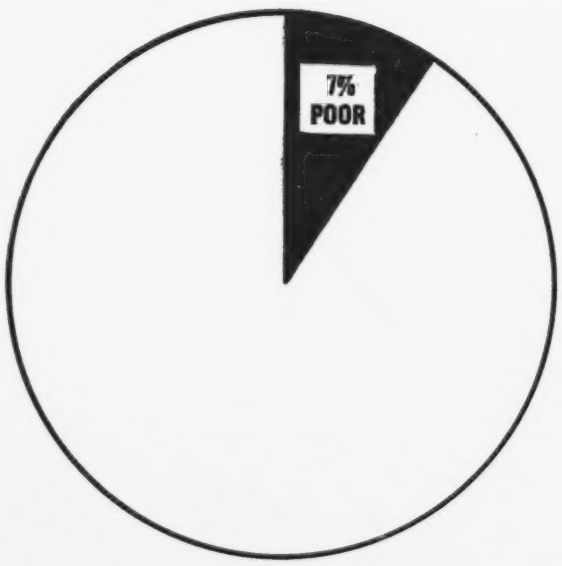
FAMILIES HEADED BY A WOMAN WORKER

WHITE FAMILIES
(2,168,000)

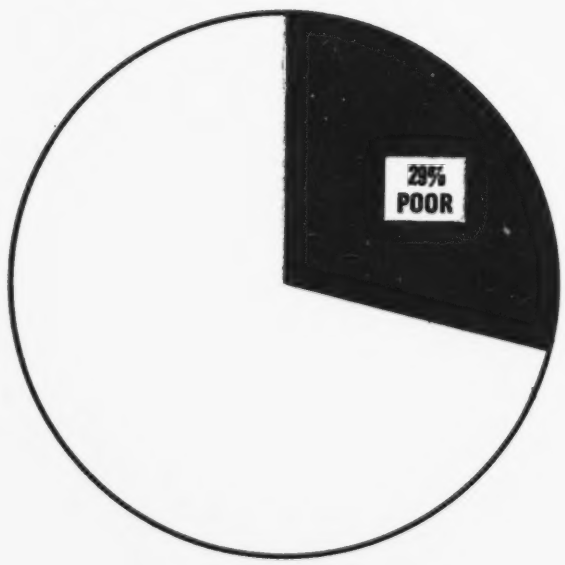


NONWHITE FAMILIES
(668,000)

FAMILIES HEADED BY A MALE WORKER



WHITE FAMILIES
(34,533,000)



NONWHITE FAMILIES
(3,242,000)

Source: See page 23.

Incidence of Poverty Is High in Families Headed by a Woman Worker (Chart K)

Families headed by a woman worker are often poor despite her participation in the labor force. Among such families 53 percent of the nonwhite and 19 percent of the white lived in poverty in 1965. The comparable percentages for families headed by a male worker were 29 percent for nonwhite and 7 percent for white.

Chart Sources

Chart A. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Special Labor Force Report No. 76; Manpower Report of the President and A Report on Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization, and Training by the U.S. Department of Labor, April 1967.

Chart B. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, No. 51.

Chart C. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, Nos. 23, 27, 30, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47, and 51.

Chart D. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Special Labor Force Report No. 76; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, No. 51.

Chart E. Manpower Report of the President and A Report on Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization, and Training by the U.S. Department of Labor, April 1967.

Chart F. National Education Association; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education; National Science Foundation; and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Chart G. U.S. Department of Labor, Monthly Labor Review, August 1947; Manpower Report of the President and A Report on Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization, and Training by the U.S. Department of Labor, April 1967.

Chart H. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Monthly Labor Review, June 1967.

Chart I. Same as chart E.

Chart J. Ibid.

Chart K. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Social Security Administration. (preliminary data)

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